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(S//NC/CIA-IUO//OC/NF) SUBJ: FOURTH BRIGADE COMMANDER COLONEL SIGIFREDO OCHOA PEREZ' VIEWS OF PROSPECTS FOR AN INSURGENT GENERAL OFFENSIVE

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COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

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SUBJ: FOURTH BRIGADE COMMANDER COLONEL SIGIFREDO OCHOA
 PEREZ' VIEWS OF PROSPECTS FOR AN INSURGENT GENERAL
 OFFENSIVE

FOURTH BRIGADE COMMANDER COLONEL SIGIFREDO ((OCHOA)) PEREZ
 RECENTLY STATED THAT HE BELIEVES THAT THE SALVADORAN INSURGENTS
 ARE CURRENTLY INCAPABLE OF LAUNCHING A GENERAL OFFENSIVE OPERATION
 EITHER ON A NATIONWIDE BASIS OR IN CHALATENANGO DEPARTMENT.

ACCORDING TO THE STAFF OFFICER, COLONEL OCHOA ALSO SAID THAT
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SEVERAL MONTHS BY THE SALVADORAN MILITARY, THE INSURGENTS HAVE
 LOST THE COMBAT INITIATIVE AND ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT DEFENDING
 THEMSELVES AND AVOIDING DECISIVE ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE SALVADORAN
 ARMY. COLONEL OCHOA ADDED THAT IN SPITE OF THE INSURGENTS'

GENERAL SITUATION HE BELIEVED THAT THEY WOULD TRY TO LAUNCH ONE
 OR MORE FAIRLY LARGE SCALE ATTACKS AGAINST HIGH PROFILE TARGETS
 PRIOR TO THE UNITED STATES GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER 1984.

OCHOA SAID THE INSURGENTS WOULD TRY TO LAUNCH THESE ATTACKS
 PRINCIPALLY FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR INTERNATIONAL PROPAGANDA

VALUE.

2. WITH RESPECT TO FRIENDLY FORCE CAPABILITIES, HE STATED THAT HIS UNIT'S PRINCIPAL EQUIPMENT NEEDS ARE NOT WITH RIFLES BUT WITH HEAVY INFANTRY WEAPONS SUCH AS .50 CALIBER MACHINE GUNS AND 90MM RECOILLESS RIFLES. HE ALSO STATED THAT EVEN THOUGH HIS UNIT IS A TACTICAL ONE, HE STILL HAS NEED OF NON-TACTICAL, CIVILIAN VEHICLES TO SUPPORT THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE, INTELLIGENCE AND CIVIL-MILITARY PROGRAMS HE WOULD LIKE TO PROMOTE IN HIS AREA OF OPERATIONS.

3. OCHOA SAID THAT HE IS CONFIDENT THAT THE INSURGENT SITUATION IN THE SOUTHERN PORTION OF CHALATENANGO IS UNDER CONTROL. HE SAID HE PLANS TO RUN SWEEP OPERATIONS IN NORTHERN CHALATENANGO WHERE INSURGENT FORCES EXIST IN LARGER CONCENTRATIONS.

4. OCHOA SAID HE FEELS THAT HIS MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS ARE NOT WITH PERSONNEL OR EQUIPMENT BUT WITH OBTAINING FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE AND CIVIC-MILITARY ACTION PROGRAMS HE WOULD LIKE TO CARRY OUT AMONG THE CIVILIAN POPULATION OF CHALATENANGO. OCHOA SAID THAT HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THESE PROGRAMS CAN BE EFFECTIVELY RUN OUT OF THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF BECAUSE THE SITUATION DIFFERS SO MUCH FROM BRIGADE TO BRIGADE. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE SALVADORAN ARMY IS NOT STAFFED TO CONDUCT THESE TYPES OF OPERATIONS ON A DECENTRALIZED BASIS.

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[REDACTED] COMMENT: COLONEL OCHOA BELIEVES IN VISITING VILLAGES OF CHALATENANGO, MIXING WITH THE PEOPLE AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO SUPPORT THE ARMY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST INSURGENTS. BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT CHARISMA, OCHOA HAS A GOOD CHANCE TO WIN OVER THE POPULACE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S SIDE MUCH AS HE DID DURING HIS YEARS IN CABANAS DEPARTMENT.)

5.

COMMENT: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
MORE INTERESTING THAN HIS IDEAS ON THE ENEMY ARE HIS ENTHUSIASM AND DRIVE. HE IS BEGINNING, AS WELL, TO UNDERSTAND CLEARLY WHERE IN SALVADOR'S NEW DEMOCRACY HE FITS AND HOW HE CAN WORK WITH DUARTE. IF ALL THE ESAF COMMANDERS WERE LIKE OCHOA, THE RATE OF PROGRESS WOULD CLEARLY BE HIGHER. THE GUERRILLAS ARE OBVIOUSLY NOT FINDING IT EASY TO LAUNCH AN OFFENSIVE OR ARE WAITING FOR A PERIOD WHEN THEIR CAPABILITIES WOULD HAVE A GREATER IMPACT IN THE U.S., I.E., SOMEWHAT CLOSER TO THE US ELECTIONS. THAT PERIOD IS NOW APPROACHING. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A SERIOUS MISTAKE TO UNDERRATE THE GUERRILLA'S VERY CONSIDERABLE MILITARY CAPACITY.)

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